

Ironwood Forest National Monument
Introduction to the Planning Process Public Meetings
March 8, 2004
Comment Summary

The following are summarized comments from both the afternoon and evening public meetings conducted Monday, March 8, 2004 at the Pima County Parks and Recreation Center in Tucson, Arizona. The meeting was focused on the topics of the draft Vision Statement and on the type of public involvement activities people would like to see as the planning process continues. Comments have been summarized and grouped by topic area and subcategory.

Comments on the draft Vision Statement

In General

- The Vision does not capture all of the constraints put on BLM by legislation
- The Vision does not follow proclamation; as worded the Vision precludes mining and recreation
- Put the vision on the website

Terminology

- People may define terms like “naturalness” differently
- “Ironwood-rich” does this mean there is a certain density of ironwood here that needs protection?
- To say, “retain its naturalness,” suggests the naturalness is “as good as it gets”
- To say, “will remain,” suggests the Monument already is what it should be
- The Vision should include wording such as: encourage a more healthy and vibrant Sonoran desert ecosystem – conserve for future generations
- Rewrite the Vision “bigger”; to include more and to indicate how the IFNM fits into the landscape and community
- Protection and conservation should be mentioned in the Vision

Uses

- The current Vision is general enough to include all uses
- Existing uses should be recognized in the Vision
- The Vision should recognize that the Monument is not pristine now; it includes roads, etc.
- The Vision should not preclude grazing
- The Vision should not restrict the alternatives to be considered
- By not including economic uses such as grazing, recreation permits, mining, dude ranches, herding, etc. in the Vision, it restricts the alternatives to be considered

Comments on Public Involvement Meeting Logistics

Format

- Having one meeting was suggested so everyone hears all the input; that way the different groups wouldn't decide things differently or "move in different directions"
- There was concern that when the group is divided into break out/smaller groups that special interest group members in attendance will not have representation in each group (break out sessions would work if the group reconvenes to review ideas)
- It was stated that an open house format is good when asking for specific input on substantive topics/plan – allows people to interact more if they are not comfortable speaking in a group setting.

Location

- The Pima County Parks and Recreation Center provides nice "connectivity" to the environmental planning process (i.e., a park facility for 'park/monument' planning)
- Consider using this location again; there is an advantage to having all meetings in one place
- Several people attending liked this location
- Present location is centrally located
- Pinal airpark was suggested as a possible location as well (but lack of lighting at night was mentioned by BLM)

Day of the week/Time of day

- Several people suggested Saturday meetings; it was suggested this would be a good day for those who cannot leave work during the week; it was also discussed that families with children would have a difficult time attending on Saturdays
- Saturday mornings could be an option
- Several people agreed that Monday through Thursday nights are best for meetings; some believe Tuesday and Wednesday are the best days for meetings
- Most weekdays were considered possible meeting days, except Friday
- Alternating weekday and weekend meetings was suggested
- Alternating nights of the week was suggested
- Providing the afternoon and evening meetings on the same day is a good option

General Logistics

- More advertising of meeting would increase turnout
- Providing a map to the meeting in promotional materials would be helpful

Comments on Topics or Ideas for Future Public Involvement

- To familiarize participants with the land, a bus tour, horseback riding tour, or interpretive walks were suggested

- A presentation by Border Patrol and BLM and other agencies about undocumented immigrants, agency jurisdictions in regard to this, and concerns about protecting the Monument from waste and debris was suggested
- A series of meetings presenting biological data available on wildlife species, population dynamics (e.g. herd size, predation, etc.) and flora was suggested
- A presentation by the Sierra Club was suggested
- A researcher discussion or lecture on the amount of ironwood with the Monument was suggested
- A presentation on riparian habitats was suggested
- Arizona Sonoran Desert Museum can provide speakers on reptiles, vegetation, etc.
- A presentation by Arizona Game and Fish was suggested where they could describe their role and responsibilities in planning and beyond A presentation assisted by GIS including representations of impact areas, resources and use areas was suggested
- Presentations about the following were suggested: recreational uses, public safety, archaeological, cultural and historical features of the Monument, right-of-way, access, and transportation issues, and a visual representation of the “objects” mentioned in the Monument Proclamation (e.g., photographs).
- Seeing the results of the University of Arizona recreation study was suggested
- Invite agencies to present information on how much recreation is “forced” off the Monument (i.e. displacement of use including illegal activities)
- A presentation on recreational shooting by Udall Center or Alternative Dispute Resolution was suggested
- Including a presentation by tribal representatives focusing on the cultural resources was suggested as a means to improve respect for the land
- A presentation discussing the management and integration of State Trust Land and private land with the BLM land was suggested; also buyout plans and pending legislation was suggested
- A presentation about all possible uses was suggested, including projections for different types of future uses
- It was suggested that a group of physically impaired people who have used IFNM present about how they access or use the IFNM now, or how they would like to access or use the Monument

Comments on General Issues

- The different land managers have different laws and policies; this plan needs to integrate these different uses. Make certain these ideas are consistent.
- There is concern about efforts to protect the Monument from undocumented immigrant waste and debris
- It was suggested that the Monument should be “kept quiet;” the more people that know about the Monument, the more problems there will be
- It was suggested that BLM develop contingency plans for implementing remedial actions to respond to unplanned incidents (e.g., goat situation)
- It was suggested that there is a need for continued access to maintain and patrol transmission lines and to maintain wildlife water

- There may be the need for increased wildlife water sources
- There is a need for access for senior citizens and people with disabilities
- The question of whether or not dogs are allowed on Monument trails was raised
- It was suggested that whatever roads are in the Monument now should remain
- It was suggested that existing roads be maintained
- There is a need for good “control” if the lands are to be open to the public (e.g. for recreation)